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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to help middle school students and their parents analyze student study habits, plan a study schedule, organize a place to study, and actually study their subjects. Students and parents should analyze a typical day's activities to see how the student spends his or her time, using a chart to see how each hourly (or half-hourly) block of time is spent. A workable study schedule should then be prepared that allows time for all required activities and approximately 3 to 5 hours of study time per week for each subject. Parents and students should select a place for studying that is quiet, well-lit, and comfortable, with access to adequate supplies and reference materials. The actual studying process should be based on the "SQ3R" method: survey, question, read, recite, and review. Students should survey the material they wish to study, refer to chapter questions or headings to develop questions about the material, read the material thoroughly, recite important points as the material is read, and review the main points covered. (MDM)

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STUDY HABITS AT HOME FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Focus On
Study Habits At Home
For
Middle School Students

A Guide for Parents and Students to Increase Learning at Home

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Focus On Study Habits At Home

A Guide for Parents and Students to
Make Better Use of Homework in
Improving Learning in the Middle School

STUDY HABITS AT HOME

Studying is very personal. The study habits of one student will usually be different than the study habits of another student, or perhaps even different than those of all other students. That is why the suggestions offered here will need to be tailored to fit each student for whom they are intended. However, there is one thing that applies to **all** students and that is that study must be planned for, must be arranged and then carefully followed if learning is expected to take place. Learning by chance is not enough in these days of more and more to be learned. There has to be a systematic way of studying, even more so in the middle school than in elementary grades. Teachers and parents can work together to make study time in school and at home more helpful for students.

Preparing a study schedule.

A good way to begin is for a student and parent to sit down and think about one day's actual activities beginning with getting up in the morning, going through the day in school and then at home, and finally going to bed at night. Block out the time in one hour or half hour blocks and indicate what you did during that time. A beginning schedule might look something like this.

CHART ON USE OF DAILY TIME
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23

TIME	ACTIVITIES
6:30— 7:15	Wake up, wash, dress, have breakfast
7:15— 8:00	Walk to school or ride bus to school
8:00— 9:00	Language Arts class
9:00—10:00	Study hall — read magazine
10:00—11:00	Math class
11:00—12:00	Phys. Ed. class
12:00— 1:00	Lunch and play games with friends
1:00— 2:00	Social Studies class
2:00— 3:00	Science class
3:00— 3:30	Study hall or Activities Period
3:30— 4:00	Walk home or take bus home
4:00— 6:00	Watch TV or go to Mall with friends
6:00— 7:00	Dinner at home
7:00— 9:00	Watch TV, listen to rock music, phone friends
9:00—10:00	Watch TV in bed. Sleep.

In that first schedule, any studying done on that Wednesday was purely an accident, done without planning. Yet, this is not too different from the daily schedules of many students, particularly those who are probably struggling with their middle school studies. In counting the hours spent in class and the hours spent in social activities, it immediately becomes apparent that very little, if any time, was devoted to studying outside of class. The need for a study schedule could not be more clearly shown. More specifically, several questions should be asked by parent and student when reviewing the **CHART ON USE OF DAILY TIME.**

USE OF DAILY TIME.

- Does the student plan daily study periods in advance?
- Are these study periods scheduled so they come just before or right after a subject class period?
- Does the student use the study periods regularly to avoid falling behind and having to cram for tests?
- Is there enough time set aside for special assignments such as projects or term papers?
- Is there time daily and weekly for regular review of lessons?
- Are social activities and recreation scheduled so they do not interfere with study time?

Preparing a workable study schedule can be an important step in developing good study habits at home and in the middle school. When planning the schedule, students should keep these ideas in mind.

- First, put down time for the "must" activities, such as time for required courses, meals, required activities such as music lessons, doctor's appointments, etc. This will then show how much time is left for study and other activities and when it is available.
- Next, for each subject, plan about 3 to 5 hours of study each week. This will vary from week to week and by subject, too. Remember not to overdo the time spent on intensive study. Include time for a short rest period between study periods as learning can suffer when the strain and pressure of concentration becomes too much.
- As much as possible, plan a study period as soon after a class as it can be arranged. This permits a student to work on an assignment while it is still fresh in mind.
- Each student has different preferences for study during different times of the day. Some students prefer study early in the day.

Others prefer hours later in the day. Try to plan for study or review during preferred hours.

- For consistency, try to study the same class subject at the same hour each day. This will make it easier to remember and to keep to a single schedule during the week.
- In addition to the daily study, try to set aside one hour each week to review each subject. Also, include time for more review just before tests or examinations.
- In the middle school grades, students need time for leisure and recreation, especially physical activity. Time should be set aside for this even if it is only for brisk walks between study periods.

A Sample Study Schedule

HOURS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6:30 A.M.	Wake Up, Wash, Dress & Breakfast						
7:15 A.M.	Go To School	Walk Or Ride Bus				Family Chore	Church,
8:00 A.M.	Language Arts Class					or	Family
9:00 A.M.	Study Language Arts Or Math					Part-time Job	Chores,
10:00 A.M.	Math Class				Math Test Today	or	Personal &
11:00 A.M.	Phys. Ed.	Study Social Studies	Phys. Ed.	Study Math	Phys. Ed.	Recreation	Recreational
12:00 NOON	Lunch & Recreation						Activities
1:00 P.M.	Social Studies					Recreation	
2:00 P.M.	Study Social Studies	Study Science	Study Social Studies	Study Science	Study Social Studies		Also
3:00 P.M.	Science	Science Test					
4:00 P.M.	After School Activities Or Free Time					Study or	
5:00 P.M.	Study Science	Study (As Needed)	Study (As Needed)	Study Social Studies	Study Science	Free Time	Study
6:00 P.M.	Dinner						& Review
7:00 P.M.	Study Math	Study Math	Study Math	Study Math	Study (If Needed)	Study Math	As Needed
8:00 P.M.	Study Language Art	Study For Science Test	Study Language Arts	Study (As Needed)	or Social Activity	Study As Needed	For New
9:00 P.M.	Reading, Recreation Or Additional Study If Needed					or Social Activity	Week

Making out a schedule like this may seem to the student to be a lot of work. However, once the format is set, it is easy to follow it and make the entries needed each week. Further, once the routine of scheduling study and other activities is established, then the student is more conscious of how his time is used, and when it is wasted or not used as well as it could be.

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Of course, it should be understood that the schedule is flexible. It will not only vary from week to week, but it may also need to be adjusted each day for events that are unexpected such as minor illnesses, school closings due to bad weather, etc. The important thing is that, in general, plans were made for the best use of the student's time for study as needed.

Once the study schedule is made out, have the student place a copy inside the cover of a notebook and another copy at home, perhaps on the wall near where studying is done.

A place for study.

Selecting a place for study at home is important. Studying requires concentration. Some students claim that they can study while listening to recordings, radio or TV. However, these distractions will **not** help a student concentrate on the material being studied. Remember, to study, it is important for the student to concentrate on the material, and any distractions will make it more difficult to think **only** about the study material.

Keeping this in mind, the parent and student should select a place at home for study. This could be a corner of a bedroom. It is not a good idea to choose a place where there is much traffic or a loud sound coming from a radio or TV as this will only make it more difficult to concentrate. Being in a room where the door can be closed to shut out household noises will be a big help for the student.

In some schools where home conditions are small and crowded, classrooms have been opened after school or early evening for study with volunteer adults such as senior citizens serving as supervisors and tutors (example — Dearborn Heights).

Next, it is important to have a surface on which to write and to place books, paper and writing materials. This could be a desk or a plain table. The work surface should be large enough so that the student can spread out the books, paper, notebooks and other materials to be used.

While not too much thought is given to comfort when studying, this is really an important consideration. For example, the height of the study table or desk should be right for the student. The chair should not be a lounge chair but should provide support for the student's lower back with the student's feet touching the floor. Some students will insist that they study best when reclining but this is not so. Improper position and lack of adequate support for a student's body will cause tension and fatigue and will detract from the learning that should be taking place. Some recommend

that the study table or desk be placed against a wall so that the student will not be distracted by objects in the room.

It is also important for parents to have the right room temperature, about 70°F. This is considered best for mental and physical alertness. If the room is too warm or too cold, the student will be uncomfortable and concentration on the lessons will suffer. Attention should also be given to proper ventilation so that the air in the room does not become too stuffy and so that there is enough fresh circulated air to assure adequate oxygen in the room.

It is important for the student to have a few tools needed for study. These should be on the table or desk top, in drawers that are handy or on nearby shelves. A dictionary is very useful. Paper, pen and pencils, erasers, scissors, paper clips and other supplies may be needed. A typewriter or computer would be very good but not absolutely essential. For math studies, a hand held calculator can be a useful tool for solving problems.

Lighting in the study room is also important. Improper lighting can cause eyestrain and fatigue and can result in reduced learning efficiency. Lighting should be adjusted so that it is not too bright and glaring and not too dim.

How to study at home.

Research on how to study effectively has produced interesting information. One result is the development of a systematic method for study that is referred to as the SQ3R method. Each of the three letters and one number refer to a step in the study process.

- SURVEY. In reading material that is organized in chapters, first survey it by reading the headings. These are usually the main points in the chapter. If the chapter has a summary at the end, read this as part of your survey too. The survey should not take more than a minute or two and will show the several core ideas to be found in the chapter.
- QUESTION. Now change the first heading into a question. This will help the student learn because it will make the student think about what is being studied. It gives a purpose for studying. Keep the question in mind while the material is studied. Do this for the other chapters as well. Some textbook authors provide a list of questions at the beginning of a chapter. These will be a good guide for reading the chapter as they identify the important ideas to be found there. Other

authors use such questions at the end of a chapter. This is a good way of checking on whether the material in the chapter was read with understanding.

- READ. Now the material in the chapter can be read. It should be read with understanding. Charts, graphs, picture captions and other materials should also be read as they help to explain the ideas in the chapter. It is important to be thorough in reading all the materials in the chapter.

- RECITE. After reading a section of the chapter, stop and repeat the important ideas in that section without looking at the book. Try to answer the questions you made up about that section and give an example or two if possible. If you feel you understand that section then move on to the next section. If you are not satisfied, then go over that section again. You may want to write down the important ideas you are trying to learn. When you feel that you are ready for the next section, use the same steps. Begin by turning the headings into questions. Read the material and try to answer the questions. Look away from the book and recite the answers to the questions. Continue the process with the next sections.

- REVIEW. As a final step, go over what has been read. Survey the headings of the chapter and be sure you understand what they mean and what important information there was in the chapter. It helps to recite the important ideas under each heading. Reread the material if necessary. Don't forget to review your class notes that are about the material in the chapter too.

Reviewing should be done right after completing the first four steps in the SQ3R method. Using this method may seem hard at first, but with practice it will become easier and it will be very helpful in studying.

Family can be very helpful in establishing good study habits in the home. Parents usually understand that studying at home is important for learning at school. Once a home study schedule is made, parents can help by reminding the student when it is study time. They can also help by seeing to it

that the student is not disturbed by very loud noise or interrupted by younger members of the family. It is very easy for a student to decide to skip study time and watch TV instead. That is when parents need to remind the student that the schedule says "study time" and not "TV." Home study should be considered as the family's responsibility with each member doing a part to make the study time for the student more helpful.

When these steps are taken, then home and school will truly be working together for the benefit of the student's learning program.

FOR FURTHER READING

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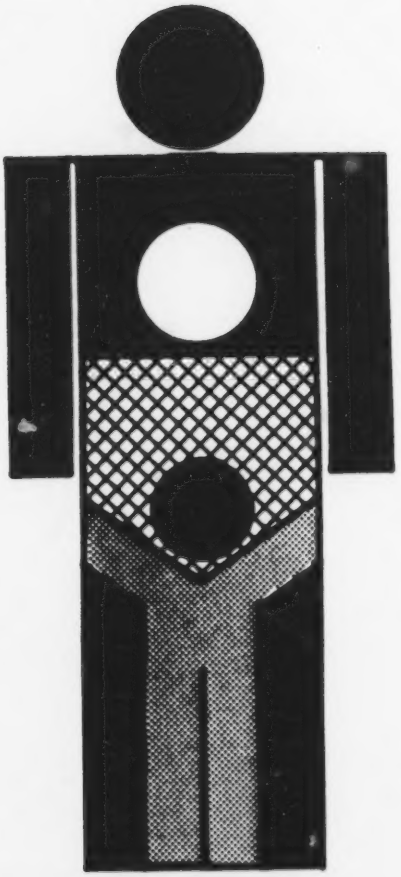

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